

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, and reconsideration of the Office Action dated December 17, 2004. Claims 9-18 and 21-25 remain pending in this application. The change to claim 18 is fully supported by the specification and original claims. No new matter is introduced as a result of this Amendment.

As an initial matter, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's express indication that claims 9-17, 21, 24, and 24 are allowed.

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The sole outstanding issue concerns the rejection of claims 18, 22, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as purportedly anticipated by Thompson et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,224,503). The Office Action asserts Thompson teaches each feature of the listed claims and thus anticipates the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Independent claim 18 (from which claims 22 and 23 depend) relates to a liquid processing apparatus. The apparatus includes a pair of circular plates arranged at both ends of the wafer holding members for supporting the wafer holding members and rotating the wafers. The apparatus also includes an ejecting orifice formed on the side inner surface of the processing container. The ejecting orifice is formed so that the ejecting orifice ejects a cleaning liquid towards a surface of the circular plate facing the side inner surface of the processing container so as to clean the surface of the circular plate. Due to the above described configuration, the claimed apparatus is able to wash the surface of the circular plate facing the side inner surface with the cleaning liquid.

In contrast, Thompson does not describe an ejecting orifice that ejects processing liquid. Instead, Thompson discloses an apparatus having a top port 65 which ejects drying gas into the processing chamber 47 for drying the wafer carrier in the cage 71. To make this possible, Thompson's apparatus employs a rotor plate 171 that has numerous apertures (see Figure 10) which allows easy flow of the drying gas towards the wafer carrier. Accordingly, the rotor plate 171 is entirely different from the circular plate of the present invention. Hence, since Thompson

fails to teach an apparatus having the claimed circular plates and cleaning liquid ejecting orifice, Thompson cannot anticipate the claimed invention.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants submit this rejection is overcome and request it be withdrawn.

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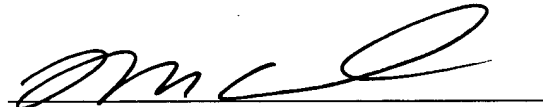
Applicants respectfully submit that this Amendment and the above remarks obviate all of the outstanding rejections in this case, thereby placing the application in condition for immediate allowance. Allowance of this application is earnestly solicited.

If any fees are due in connection with the filing of this Amendment, such as fees under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, please charge the fees to Deposit Account 02-4300; Order No. 033082.072.

Respectfully submitted,

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